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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000308

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [ASEC](#) [KPKO](#) [MOPS](#) [CG](#)
SUBJECT: BEMBA, RUBERWA RESISTING REPLACEMENT OF PERSONAL
GUARDS BY POLICE

REF: A. KINSHASA 76

- [1](#)B. 06 KINSHASA 1357
- [1](#)C. 06 KINSHASA 1740
- [1](#)D. 06 KINSHASA 1673
- [1](#)E. 06 KINSHASA 1743

Classified By: PolCouns DBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Former vice presidents Azarias Ruberwa and Jean-Pierre Bemba are resisting orders to have their personal guard forces replaced by Congolese national police by March [1](#)15. Bemba's guards remain the source of greatest concern since the public release of the order from the army chief of staff on March 7. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Former Congolese rebel leaders and transitional vice presidents Azarias Ruberwa and Jean-Pierre Bemba have deflected a March 6 order signed by armed forces chief of staff Lt. General Kisempia Sungilanga that their respective guard forces report for integration into the national army. Kisempia's order referred to the unilateral presidential decree of November 15, 2006 which granted the four transitional vice presidents a number of benefits for the following five years, including 12-member contingents of police bodyguards (ref A).

[1](#)3. (SBU) Kisempia's initial correspondence to the leaders, dated February 13, requested that they send their guard forces to a military integration center and allow them to be replaced by police. The Sun City Accords had entitled Ruberwa and Bemba to retain a limited guard force. Bemba maintained a guard force of hundreds, far in excess of what was authorized. His guards were involved in violent clashes with the Republican Guard (GR) and other forces loyal to President Kabila during the heightened tensions of last year's political campaigns (ref B, C).

[1](#)4. (U) A Bemba reply of February 28, leaked to the opposition newspaper "Le Phare" in its March 9 edition, cited the October 29 Declaration of Post-Electoral Intentions between the Kabila and Bemba camps in which Bemba claimed "it was understood that the arrangement assuring my security which figured at that date would remain in force" (ref D). Kisempia's March 6 order was publicly released March 7. MONUC spokesman Jean-Tobie Okala announced plans the same day to withdraw peacekeeping troops currently posted at or near Bemba's and Ruberwa's residences following conclusion of ongoing discussions about the issue.

[1](#)5. (SBU) Neither Bemba nor Ruberwa has commented publicly. However, their representatives, Delly Sessanga and Kabasubabo

Katulondi respectively, were interviewed by Radio Okapi March 13. Both reiterated familiar and unresolved complaints about the integration process. Sessanga noted that Kabila's GR, composed essentially of Katangans, had not received the same orders. Kabasubabo called for further discussion of "a certain number of things," which those familiar with longstanding RCD complaints would understand to mean fears that its Tutsi soldiers risked being targeted for mistreatment by other troops because of their ethnicity. Both ignored the fact that most of their fighters have already departed for integration centers.

16. (SBU) Bemba's guards are the more numerous and more troublesome of the two groups. Unlike Ruberwa's men, they remain a source of potential instability. They were implicated in the November 11 shoot-out with security forces which left four civilians dead (ref C), as well as the August 20-22 fighting with GR troops and police (ref B). The worst of the August 20-22 violence, however, was provoked by an ill-advised, and ultimately unsuccessful effort by presidential loyalist forces to forcibly disarm or otherwise neutralize Bemba's guards. Many of them and their families remain camped in squalid conditions in the large compound of the official residence of the central bank governor, ceded for Bemba's official use during the transition, on Kinshasa's Boulevard de 30 Juin.

17. (C) Ruberwa chief of staff Tshimpanga Matala told us March 8 he (and by implication, Ruberwa) remained concerned about the presence of Bemba's guards in the city. He noted that Bemba travels with a large and heavily-armed convoy whenever he moves about town from his personal residence on the river. He did not express opposition to reintegration of Ruberwa's guards, but said it was an issue which needed to be

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discussed further, including with the guards themselves.

18. (C) Bemba's green-bereted fighters have maintained a visible presence in the immediate area around both his private riverside home and his former official residence since Kisempia's March 6 announcement. RSO reports that in the past week Bemba's guards have twice stopped and searched vehicles of the Embassy's security contractor making their regular night patrols. Elements of the buff-bereted Kinshasa Defense Force increased their deployment at nearby locations on the night of March 7, and remain in place. As of March 13, MONUC peacekeepers maintain their sandbagged positions at several locations in the central Gombe district of Kinshasa where Bemba's guard force is present.

19. (C) SRSG Swing told the Ambassadors/Charges of the UK, France, Belgium, U.S. and Angola that Kabila said on March 12 that the government did not intend to try to forcibly disarm or replace Bemba's guards, but Kabila insisted the problem of Bemba's guards needs to be solved. Swing encouraged Kabila to designate representatives to talk directly to the Bemba camp to find a way forward. Bemba meanwhile continues to express serious concerns about his safety.

110. (C) Comment: Bemba and his followers failed to fully comply with the November 2006 agreement to move his troops out of the city (ref E), but they are right to note that the same standards are not being applied to the GR. Per General Kisempia's order, Bemba's and Ruberwa's guards are now supposed to report for integration by March 15. Defense Minister Chikez Diemu told the DCM the issue had been discussed at the first meeting of the Council of Ministers March 10, and noted the government was willing to be flexible in order to resolve it. Swing clearly would like to withdraw the MONUC troops stationed near Bemba's house under terms of the late 2006 agreement, but is unlikely to do so pending some kind of resolution of Bemba's security situation. There is little doubt that Bemba feels threatened, indeed at times appearing obsessed by a need for excessive personal protection. It is also likely that Bemba has promised

financial or other rewards to those guards still with him,
promises that he will find increasingly difficult to fulfill.

Ultimately a political resolution is the only viable
solution. End comment.

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